

Oral Questions

Our independent analysis for jobs plan, to be released this week, shows over 130,000 new jobs would be established in three years without any increase in the deficit by an infrastructure program following the Federation of Canadian Municipalities approach.

Does it not make sense to put men and women back to work in this economy and rebuild the country at the same time?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Yes, indeed it does, Mr. Speaker, and that is precisely what we are trying to do, not like his friends in the New Democratic government in Ontario that spent a billion bucks on infrastructure and the creation of new jobs and they got 975 jobs created.

We can do better than that, Mr. Speaker.

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• (1440)

[Translation]

TRADE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Last Thursday, the minister responsible for international trade in the United States, Mickey Kantor, said that President Clinton would not go ahead with the North American free trade agreement unless and until he obtained parallel agreements on labour and the environment.

Could the Prime Minister tell this House why the government intends to move ahead very quickly with this agreement in Canada, when Canada could also ask for parallel accords not only on labour and the environment but also for clarification of the meaning of "subsidy" and "dumping" and for the same treatment as Mexico on energy?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as far as energy is concerned, my friend intervened in Western Canada with the National Energy Program. We do not want any more programs like that in Canada so that is not a concern of ours at the international level.

Now, as for Mr. Kantor's statement, I would be prepared to examine it. I can also repeat to my friend what I told him last week in the House, as President

Clinton himself said last Friday in a press conference: the Mexico-Canada-U.S. free trade agreement is a stand alone document and supplementary agreements would not go against or weaken the spirit or letter of this document.

Given that, it is definitely in our interest to proceed with ratifying the agreement in a timely fashion.

[English]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity here. The American administration does not want to proceed. It will not submit the legislation to Congress until it has its side agreements.

I do not understand why the government does not want to take this opportunity and move right away to make some changes to the North American free trade agreement and the FTA so that Canadian interests can be protected. We have an opportunity here. The Americans have created the opportunity for the Canadian government and I do not understand why the government wants to proceed in Canada when the United States is not ready to proceed before the Congress of the United States.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend says that the administration does not want to proceed. That of course is incorrect. The administration is going to proceed with the NAFTA agreement on a stand-alone basis.

The President indicated in the campaign that the supplemental agreements he is seeking are not instruments that would affect the agreement itself.

My hon. friend says that we are protecting the Canadian interest. My hon. friend says he did not say that. He did say that. He said that the President said it very specifically. I produced the transcript last week and I will be happy to send my hon. friend for his own examination a copy of the transcript this afternoon. That is precisely what he said.

In regard to the Canadian interest, we believe that the Canadian interest has been well and amply protected in the North American free trade agreement. In regard to the free trade agreement itself, it is worth noting that trade between Canada and the United States is up 12.9 per cent last year alone and \$18 billion since it was signed.